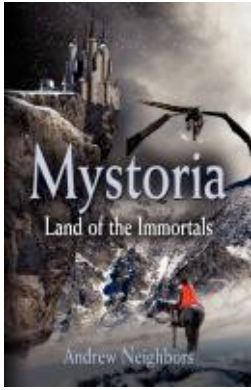


A fantastical landscape featuring a castle with multiple spires perched on a rocky cliff. A large dragon with dark wings is flying in the sky. In the foreground, a person wearing a red cape is riding a white horse along a path. The scene is set against a dark, starry sky.

Mystoria

Land of the Immortals

Andrew Neighbors



The vampire warrior Michael and the beautiful witch Jasmine are thrown into a violent war against the werewolves in the ancient world of Mystoria. They battle powerful immortals and mystical creatures on their path to discovering the truth and staying alive against insurmountable odds. Betrayal, revenge, and deceit collide with love, friendship, and loyalty on a magical journey through Mystoria, land of the immortals.

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CHAPTER 1

The Bodyguards

The howling wind blew fresh snow from the stone towers of the dreary Greyloure Castle into the cold, dark sky. The fortress was an intimidating presence protruding from the highest peaks of the Enchanted Mountains. It served as a constant reminder of the division between the northern and southern regions of Mystoria, the land of the immortals. The icy peaks of the Enchanted Mountains stretched as far as the eye could see to the east and west of Greyloure Castle. Only one way led through the treacherous mountains that divided the land, and that was an impenetrable fortress that towered over the southern region of Mystoria.

Three immortals stood in a circle just outside the main entrance to Greyloure. They stood on a patch of snow a mere ten yards long and twenty yards wide. There was a narrow, wooden bridge leading down either side of the entrance. One bridge led to the western lands of the vampires and the other to the eastern lands of the werewolves. Bursting from just below the castle was a powerful waterfall that fell hundreds of feet to the raging rapids of Piranha River. Hidden behind the castle to the north was the land of the wizards and witches. The three immortals that stood outside the massive iron gate that led into the castle were the strongest of their kind. They served as the bodyguards of the ancient leaders of their people who were inside at the annual conference of the immortals.

Standing with her back to the gate was Jasmine, a witch protecting the king of Mystoria. She was absolutely stunning in a long, white, fur coat that huddled around her neck and stretched all the way to the ground. Long, blonde hair tumbled over the coat's collar, and green eyes intently glared from a beautiful face. She had been picked for her strength and power,

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but her beauty was second to none. Her slender white wand could easily be seen tapping against her leg as the beautiful witch made known that there was more to her than her looks.

To her right was the athletic and dangerous vampire, Michael. In stark contrast to Jasmine, Michael was dressed in black leather and armor. His sword was still sheathed in its scabbard, but his hands were ready at his side to grab the weapon in a flash. Michael looked like a fierce, medieval warrior, and he was just that. The vampire was the greatest warrior of his people sent to protect their leader at the annual conference. His black hair was almost as long as Jasmine's, but his eyes were as dark as the sky above. Michael knew that Jasmine was a force to be reckoned with, but he could not help but be mesmerized by her beauty. The witch was gorgeous and intriguing, but the other immortal captivated his soldier instincts. He believed that his immediate threat was the ferocious animal to his right.

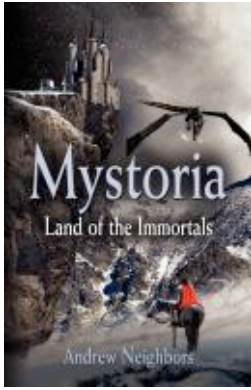
Rex was a werewolf. Although still in human form, Rex was an intimidating and foreboding presence. Neither Michael nor Jasmine had ever seen anyone as big as the hand-picked werewolf. His biceps were larger than Michael's legs, and his neck was as thick as a tree trunk. His clothes were ragged and dirty, and his beard and hair were dark brown and unkempt. The werewolf's breathing steadily got heavier and heavier as he looked like he would charge at any moment, and with only a few yards between them, the other two immortals had their focus on the wild-eyed beast.

The three bodyguards had the same mission. Each was sent to accompany the master of their kind to an ancient conference that kept the peace of the land. The masters did not really need them, but it was an ancient ritual to bring the greatest warrior to the meeting. They were a show of force to others that a battle against their species would bring about certain doom. Michael

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thought that an older, hardened wizard would have struck more fear in him than the gorgeous witch, but he figured it was some sort of mind game of the magicians.

There had been peace in Mystoria for three hundred years, so it was imperative that the meeting went smoothly. This annual custom kept the powerful immortals from destroying one another like they had almost done three hundred years ago. The immortals that had survived the War of Severance told stories that had become the nightmares for those whom had not seen it. For those that experienced it first-hand, haunting and frightening memories stayed with them forever. Another war could destroy the land and the immortals in it, so the masters of their people met in secret to discuss the treaty of the War of Severance and how to keep the peace amidst three very different clans in one land called Mystoria.



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